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## Second Committee

**Summary record of the 22nd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 27 October 2003, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Ms. Cronenberg Mossberg (Vice Chairman) ..... (Sweden)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.*

**Agenda item 99: Training and research**

**(a) United Nations Institute for Training and Research** (A/58/183)

**(b) United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy** (A/58/305 and A/58/305/Corr.1)

1. **Mr. Boisard** (Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/183), said that the volume of services delivered by UNITAR had remained fairly stable. The main programmes related to environment and sustainable development. Training programmes for diplomats continued to be the showpiece of UNITAR and were tailored to specific requests. Other offerings, concerning inter alia the legal aspects of debt management, had been extended to new geographic regions.

2. The main event since the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly was the opening of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Hiroshima, Japan. It would focus on the training of administrative and non-governmental officials from Afghanistan in post-conflict reconstruction.

3. Thanks to its operational flexibility, UNITAR had undertaken a variety of initiatives in cooperation with other organizations. These included training programmes on information systems, the provision of access to satellite imaging, a joint venture to build capacity in responding to the challenge of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and a programme of decentralized cooperation, launched under a "type 2" partnership on sustainable urbanization. UNITAR had remained strictly within its mandate of training and capacity-building, and was seeking to further strengthen and improve its existing curriculum rather than to develop in completely new areas. The diversity and quality of its programmes remained at a satisfactorily high level.

4. UNITAR nevertheless hoped to extend access to those programmes to developing countries and those with economies in transition. To that end, it had recently introduced an interactive "e-Learning" portal. It was expected that the UNITAR system would be used for other programmes conducted by the Institute and more widely throughout the United Nations.

5. While the Institute's activities had continued to develop in 2003, its financial base remained precarious. The issue of rental and maintenance costs of the premises used in Geneva and New York was to be discussed in the Fifth Committee and a decision was expected at the current session of the General Assembly. The issue of greatest concern, however, was that the volume of non-earmarked voluntary contributions were radically insufficient. The only way to ensure UNITAR's survival in the long-term was by having a robust General Fund.

6. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the newly appointed Director of the United Nations System Staff College, said that the decision to found the Staff College had served to spread and sustain the new unity of purpose that had emerged in the United Nations system in recent years.

7. **Mr. Cartwright** (Director of the United Nations System Staff College), introducing his first report on the work, activities and accomplishments of the Staff College (A/58/305), said that the College was intended to act as an agent of change within the United Nations system and it had been invited to collaborate closely with member States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society, training and learning institutions, and others.

8. The financial resources of the College, came from four major sources, namely, core contributions from the United Nations system, contributions from the host country and member States and revenue from providing training and advisory services.

9. The activities and work programme depended on "buy-in" from its clients, which meant that although the College offered services and proposed projects, it was the clients who set the agenda. Thus the College's work programme was firmly linked to achieving system-wide goals and improving service delivery to member States. Furthermore, the College had to establish a professional relationship with its clients, and be perceived as being of a sufficiently high standard. It also had to provide value for money, and therefore had to keep its costs as low as possible and, finally, as an agent of change, it had to examine its

management practices and procedures and make adjustments where appropriate.

10. With regard to the future of the College, he said the work programme for the 2004-2005 biennium would be based on achieving results in four areas: training and learning aimed at individual staff members; systems development for institutions; collaboration and awareness raising within the United Nations system as a whole; and internal capacity-building.

11. Thus far the College had demonstrated its capacity to earn revenue. In order to be able to complete its work programme, the College must continue to attract adequate funding both from member States and from clients within the United Nations system. Judging from what it had accomplished thus far there was reason for optimism about the future of the College.

12. **Mr. Bernadini** (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the acceding countries (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), noted that the United Nations System Staff College had made a significant contribution to maintaining a cohesive system-wide management culture at the United Nations and said that his delegation planned to submit a draft resolution on the item.

13. **Mr. Shamaa** (Egypt) said that his delegation wished to congratulate the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College for their excellent work.

14. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) said that his delegation wished to encourage UNITAR to maintain the momentum on its capacity-building projects and intensify its efforts to build partnerships with the private sector. With regard to online learning, he stressed that although it was good to develop new approaches for creating and sharing knowledge, online learning programmes should not take precedence over in-country training, considering the different levels of attainment, cost and access to information technology between regions and within countries.

15. It was regrettable that while the trend of funding for special programmes had remained satisfactory, the General Fund of UNITAR was still weak. His delegation urged Member States, in particular developed countries, to resume their voluntary contributions to the General Fund. Furthermore, it urged the General Assembly to resolve once and for all the longstanding issue of rental and maintenance costs of the premises used by UNITAR in Geneva and New York, including the question of the Institute's accumulated debts. It would have been useful if the report of the Secretary-General had included comments on negotiations in that regard. His delegation looked forward to the separate report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/292(V).

16. **Mr. Pantzer** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland especially appreciated the work being done by UNITAR in collaborating with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), UNEP Chemicals and the Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel Conventions on hazardous chemicals and wastes. That cooperation could be strengthened if the permanent secretariats of the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions were located in Geneva along with the secretariats of UNITAR and the Basel Convention.

17. One of the Institute's most valuable resources was the combination of knowledge and know-how it had acquired through multilateral negotiations and through its work in the field. Switzerland attached special importance to the programmes on environmental law, climate change and training in legal aspects of debt and financial management, and negotiation. UNITAR also deserved support for its online courses, which made good use of the new possibilities offered by information technology.

18. Member States should strongly support UNITAR, both politically and financially. The weakness of the General Fund could jeopardize the operations and the autonomy of the Institute. As one of the Institute's main donors, Switzerland would continue to support both the General Fund and the Special Purpose Grant Fund.

19. Switzerland noted with satisfaction the progress made by the United Nations System Staff College. Switzerland supported its work with the Global Compact, the resident coordinator system project and the early warning and preventive measures project.

20. **Mr. Edghill** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that it would be useful if future reports on the work of UNITAR included graphic and tabular formats to provide a snapshot perspective of the geographic and thematic spread with

regard to the delivery of specific activities undertaken by UNITAR.

21. The CARICOM States appreciated the level of delivery by UNITAR of seminars, workshops and meetings, as well as the increase in the ratio of capacity-building projects in relation to training activities. However, some consideration should be given to the inclusion of small island developing States, duly categorized by subregion, among the target countries benefiting from that focus. They also applauded UNITAR for its initiative in respect of training offered to diplomats accredited to the United Nations. However, the benefits of such training opportunities were in most cases beyond the reach of missions with very small complements of staff. The question of the timing of the scheduled programmes or activities should be addressed in order to provide real opportunities for diplomats of small missions.

22. The initiation of training in information and communication technology in anticipation of the World Summit on the Information Society was a welcome development. CARICOM States would welcome the establishment of the relevant contacts to facilitate delivery to target groups in the Caribbean subregion in situ. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific was a model worthy of emulation in that regard, as were the partnership arrangements that had yielded such positive results. The disposition and availability of UNITAR to engage in such partnerships should feature prominently in a proactive outreach programme undertaken in collaboration with regional United Nations Information Centres and be complemented by an advocacy drive to mobilize the resources necessary to deliver the desired activities where they would have maximum impact.

23. The advancement of the Institute's cooperation with the private sector was also a significant and welcome development, and new and innovative strategies must be explored. The Institute's initiative in collaboration with the secretariat of the Global Compact in favour of training and capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition was a step in the right direction. The online training programme was also a useful mechanism.

24. The member States of CARICOM viewed with concern the precarious financial situation of UNITAR and called on all United Nations Member States, and in particular the developed countries, to resume their contributions to the General Fund.

25. **Mr. Hassan** (Pakistan) said that his delegation greatly valued the contribution being made by the United Nations Staff College project, the United Nations University and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and noted with satisfaction that UNITAR had focused more on the capacity-building aspect of its mandate. With regard to the activities of UNITAR, he noted that it was conducting programmes in diverse fields, some requiring the involvement of highly specialized experts. It would be more productive if the Institute focused on some priority areas in which it had expertise.

26. His delegation noted with concern that UNITAR continued to face financial constraints. It was particularly disturbing to see that while the Institute continued to provide free training facilities to Member States, the United Nations was still not ready to provide it with rent-free space. It was to be hoped that during its current session, the General Assembly would send a clear signal that the Institute should be provided with office space by the United Nations on a rent- and maintenance-free basis.

27. **The Chairman** asked the Executive Director of UNITAR to expand on his previous statement and provide information on the agencies that collaborated with UNITAR in connection with its programme on AIDS.

28. **Mr. Broisard** (Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research) said that the Institute's cooperation with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) involved a number of elements of collateral cooperation. UNITAR was working with all the organizations that were part of UNAIDS and it had developed special ties with the World Health Organization, with the United Nations Development Programme, at the level of the field offices, and with the World Bank, which was considering becoming involved in financing of the programme. That was one level of cooperation.

29. The second level involved the public-private partnership. The Institute had had the good fortune to receive support from British Petroleum, a private corporation that had implemented revolutionary changes in its management practices. The two advisers who had guided that evolution had written about their experiences in a book called *Learning to Fly*, which was a best seller in the management field. He had

written to the Chairman of BP asking them for possible help, and the Chairman had responded by making the head of training of BP available to UNITAR for 12 to 18 months, free of any strings whatsoever. That in turn had allowed UNITAR to launch a very innovative methodology, since the whole idea of BP's management reform was based on creating and sharing knowledge. That type of cooperation was what had enabled UNITAR to conduct so many different programmes.

30. The third level of cooperation was that of decentralized cooperation. The Institute had launched cooperative programmes in five countries, Brazil, Guinea, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia. Meetings were organized in every city, town or region in the countries involved. Delegations from UNITAR collaborated with staff of a variety of departments and ministries involved in fighting AIDS, and experience and insights were then shared at the country level. Through that process of disseminating know-how involving self-evaluation, UNITAR was becoming involved in fighting AIDS.

**Agenda item 93 (b): Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: human resources development**

*Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.5*

31. **Mr. Hamdou** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.5 and drew attention to paragraphs 2, 11 and 12.

**Agenda item 95: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**

*Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.8*

32. **Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.8, on the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015. His delegation had received comments on the draft resolution from one delegation and would like to receive additional constructive proposals, with a view to ensuring that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus.

*The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.*